/121/ Notes on the Terms and the Kinship System of the Tukano

by Marcos Fulop

/Page 122 is blank. An errata sheet appears between pp. 122 and 123. The errata have been corrected in the text of the translation./

/123/ The material that is presented here was collected in the period between June 11 and September 9, 1954, during our stay in the hamlet /Sp. caserío/ of Guadalajara, located on the Paca River, a tributary of the Papurí /Papury/ River, in the Comisaría Especial del Vaupés /Uaupés/. Performing the duties of informant and interpreter were Marcos Sierra and Manuel Sierra, respectively, two blood brothers, members of the patrilineal sib /Sp. sib/ Urémiri Sáraro and of the phratry /Sp. fratría/ Yepá Bajuári Majsá.

As the investigation went deeper, we became aware of the existence of five phratries, located at great distances from one another, and each one of them speaking a different idiom, since they have adopted the language of their nearest neighbors. It could be proved, nevertheless, that there is a consciousness of tribal unity upon observing the conduct of native members of other phratries each time that these landed or spent the night in Guadalajara. On each occasion the Tukano /Tucano/ visitors who did not belong to the Yepá Bajuári Majsá phratry used the correspondent kinship terms in their dealings with the Sierra brothers (Urémiri Sáraro sib), and when they were asked to which tribe they belonged, they answered that it was to the tribe Yepá Majsá (Yepá = Land; Majsá = People), which is the name with which the Tukano designate themselves. Sometimes the Tukano who belonged to other phratries did not speak the Tukana /Tucano/ language, and on these occasions Marcos Sierra acted as interpreter for the rest of the inhabitants of Guadalajara. The difficulties of the great distances made it impossible for us to visit other sibs of the Yepá Bajuári Majsá phratry, and, similarly, none of the remaining four phratries. Therefore, the present study is limited by this factor, as all our information has come from Marcos Sierra, member of the Urémiri Sáraro sib, of the Yepá Bajuári Majsá phratry, and shaman of the hamlet of Guadalajara.

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881 without the cutting of the hair, however. At the following men-
*[192] struation, Məhẽka-nĩʂé, the practices of the puberty initiation are done again. This time, however, there is no segregation of the young woman, and all the acts take place with more solemnity, in view of everybody.

c) Nomenclature of kinship and of affinity.

1) Kinship.

611 Among the tribes of the Uaupés it is generation /Port. geração,
[601] generation, procreation, descent/ that establishes true kinship. They recognize it not only between ancestors (fõx-kãkõra, grandparents) and descendants (marĩ-bero-maxsã), but also in the collateral line. And kinship imposes two very grave obligations, that is, that of defense (vengeance) and that of matrimonial interdiction.

602 The components of the same tribe, although born and living
• 619 in different malocas or povoados, are considered axkawerẽra (86),
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> 86. The term axkawerẽra is beginning to be extended also to the individuals of another tribe connected by ties of affinity and of blood.

a term translated by those who speak Portuguese by "parentes" /relatives/ and sometimes also by "irmãos" /brothers/. For this reason we are of the opinion (VIII-2, a) that initially the local group coincided with the family.

*192 Those of another tribe, even those connected by some degree
609 of affinity, or consanguinity, and also the civilized are all axpẽra (87),

> 87. Axpẽra, properly speaking, is the plural of the pronoun and adjective axpĩ (masculine) and axpego, feminine, other.

that is strangers, foreigners.

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619 True kinship, therefore, exists only between the individuals of the same tribe, and with all of them.

2) Affinity.

582 Although strict tribal exogamy is in force, marriage establishes between the children and the relatives of both their father and their mother relations of affinity, similar to those of kinship (not, however, the obligations of vengeance and of matrimonial interdiction) and with a special nomenclature, although not as rich in terms as that of kinship.

582 Since "preferential marriage" is in force (usually with the
601 first cousins of another tribe), that is, with the first cousins on
602 the mother's side, or baxsú-kãra (Masc. sing. baxsukõ, Fem. sing. baxsukɔ), they admit the relation of affinity of the baxsukãra among themselves, as well as between the parents and the class of the "possible spouses" of the children. There are appropriate terms for these "possible spouses," "possible parents-in-law," and "possible children-in-law."

601 There might perhaps not even exist a term to express the
602 relation of affinity; then they use a term for the relation of kinship. For example, the native idioms of the Uaupés do not have terms corresponding to stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter. In indirect discourse they describe the relation that exists, that is, one is called: "husband of my mother" (stepfather), "wife of my father" (stepmother), "son or daughter of my husband, or of my wife" (stepson, stepdaughter). And in direct discourse one is called by the name of the relation (uncle, grandfather, etc.), and they will call the stepchildren "children."

601 There are indeed terms, although also classificatory, that is, applicable to a whole class of individuals, corresponding to son-in-law and brother-in-law, but used almost solely for indirect discourse. For direct discourse they prefer the terms of social kinship; of these terms we shall indicate only the most common

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2) Local or Territorial Group.

a) Local group.

The natives of the Uaupés demonstrate a great spirit of sociability. Tribes differing in origin and in language live a short distance from each other, connected by the ties of exogamous marriage, the cordiality (93)

> 93. It seems that we can advance this statement, even though knowing that not only individuals bear resentment and harbor desires for vengeance against other individuals, even of their own tribe, but recalling besides that there are groups hostile toward other groups of the same tribe. The vengeances and fights, especially on the occasions of the caxiri, reveal these enmities and aversions that the natives know how to hide under the mask of an external cordiality.

in their social relations, inviting each other reciprocally for the great feasts and maintaining the tradition of generous hospitality. Moreover, there are found today in one and the same povoado individuals or families from another tribe, almost always in order to facilitate the application of exogamy. One and the same tribe, as was seen (Ch. III), is found scattered along the rivers in a vast territory, subdivided into groups that are alternated with those of another tribe.

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Originally each group or Gens lived in a community, in a large dwelling called maloca, Wi'ĩ pahiríwi, which means great house, collective dwelling. Besides the advantages of an economic nature, this would facilitate defense against animals and human beings.

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With the advance of civilization, security has grown and increased, and, on the other hand, likewise the demands for comfort. For this reason, the primitive malocas have been disappearing and are succeeded by the povoados or groupings of family residences.

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565 but an admirable equality of rights and duties, as well as of property and of work.
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Various circumstances justify such inexistence of classes: 1st, it is a matter of numerically small groups; 2nd, the warm and humid climate, if it facilitates a supply of the necessary food at all /469/ times of the year, it does not allow an abundant provisioning and the development of riches. Now, where there are no rich people, there are no classes, neither masters nor slaves; 3rd, the life in common, which the conditions introduced and tradition established; 4th, the fear of the envy that the well-being of one might cause in the others, and that so many times is manifested even in connection with the small inequalities (see V - 14); 5th, the lack of a tribunal to restore rights and indemnify damages.

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3) Linguistic group.

a) Linguistic group.

• 619 Above the local Group, among the populations of the Amazonian Northwest, there is only the linguistic group. It is made up of several local groups, forming at times a total of thousands of individuals, with the following elements in common: 1st, they claim to be from one and the same tribe or nation and, therefore, consider themselves "brothers"; 2nd, they speak the same language; 3rd, marriage between them is definitely forbidden.

It is, then, a matter of an ethnic unit only. The groups that constitute it never gather together, they do not own property that might be said to be in common: house, land, fishing waters of such a tribe, etc. Because of the distances the relations between groups from different tribes are more frequent than between groups of the same tribe.

There is, then, no social or political organization of an entire tribe; and the elders do not recall of ever having heard of such an organization. There has indeed been some tuxaua with greater ascendancy and whom other tuxauas consulted and whose advice

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619 622 they followed in the more serious questions that involved relations with other tribes or with the whites. Each one, however, judging himself perfectly independent and even with very little power over the other men of his own maloca.

701 622 It consists, indeed, of the temporary union of several groups for an aggressive or defensive military expedition under the orders of a single chief (106).

175 721 648 701 106. Thus the renowned Ajuricaba of the Manao nation, with his two thousand bows, navigating true fleets under the flag of Holland, hunted Indians of other tribes in order to sell them as slaves to the Hollanders of Guiana (cf. Xavier Sampaio, "Diario," n. 336). In 1858 Pe. Romualdo Gonçalves de Azevedo (Archivo do Amazonas, Vol. II, n. 7, p. 86), narrating the episode of the "Cristo de Juquira" (cf. VII-4, b), estimates that a thousand persons from various localities and tribes gathered in Juquira in declared hostility to the civilized. Alexandre R. Ferreira ("Diário" of 1785), apropos of the legendary city of Manoa, vast captial of the Manao, explains to us that on the river Uaupaxi where the Manao formerly were: "the reported aldeia /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ (irananauoca) did not have the qualities and greatnesses that the city of Manoa paraded, because, notwithstanding that all these were confederated, their aldeias were nevertheless independent of one another and many of them as populous as Irananauoca."

622 797 /470/ There has never been a true authority, but only the ascendancy of one tuxaua over the others. This is more or less the present situation of a Missionary, and, with certain reservations, we can speak of a hypertuxauaship.

4: Silva--716 M-4,5 (1947-1958) 1962 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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b) Tribe or Nation?

619 Three elements, that is, a certain degree of political cohesion, a concentration of powers in the hands of the chiefs, and an identity of culture, are included and associated under the concept of Tribe, as commonly understood. Now the first two elements are not found among the human groups in the Amazonian Northwest. One can not, then, speak in terms of Tribe. Perhaps it would have been better to call them Nation. We have, in reality, various national groups, each one with its language, presenting characteristic somatic features, in spite of the regime or exogamy in force among them.

All of them, however, constitute a single cultural group. As a matter of fact, they possess common traditions and practices, that is, a similar pattern of life and assemblage of observances that, strange to us, are common to all, such as the rules of marriage, of exogamy, of puberty initiation, etc.

c) Linguistic Families.

197 We await the decision of the specialists on various linguistic questions: 1st, do those that are generally listed as languages deserve to be called this? or might some of them perhaps be merely dialectical variations? 2nd, what is the relationship between them, perhaps one derived from another? which ones would be the derived ones? 3rd, would the present idioms be sister languages, originating from ancient idioms that have already disappeared? which ones would these be? 4th, and, with this last hypothesis, which of the present idioms of the Uaupés comes closest to the original mother tongue?

Attributing a "Language" to each of the "Tribes," as a temporary and hypothetical assumption, we can say (as we have done passim in the present study) that the tribes of the Brazilian Uaupesina area are divided into three distinct and irreducible Families of Languages: the Tukano family, the Arwake family, and the Makú family.

4: Silva--722 M-4,5 (1947-1958) 1962 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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554 614 [601] 4th. -- The malocas do not date from the same time, some are earlier and others later, having originated perhaps from some schism. The groups that have been organized more recently always respect the primacy of the older ones, calling them Mamí.

554 614 829 5th. -- The large number of groups that began to appear, however, complicated this hierarchization, hence the practical doubt that assails the Indian in some cases, not being able to say who would have precedence.

797 177 614 2) With the advance of civilization toward those regions, the division is accentuated, and one can discover a double cause for such a fact. The first is the tightening of the family ties and its valorization becoming ever greater, thanks to the support of the religious and civil authorities, and for this reason the family group can already be strong enough by itself. The second is the povoados that appear, consisting of families of different subtribes or even of different tribes. One can foresee, if things go on as they are, that there will no longer be any fusion of tribes, but, instead, a leveling and amalgamation into Brazilian nationality.

This amalgamation is favored not so much by the marriages with the civilized, which up to the present are very rare events, but by the traditional exogamy and knowledge and love of the Brazilian homeland, which has gained ground among these children of the forest, thanks to the work of the Religious Missions and of their schools.

e) Phratrics (sibs) or totemic clans?

• 619 Just as the Tribe, better called Nation, does not have a chief, neither do its subdivisions, or Subtribes (111),

> 111. Obviously the term Subtribe is improper; just as that of Tribe does not strictly apply to the national assemblage of these natives.

such as we find today, have one. They are not political units, but only ethnic ones.

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614 825 flight, which tends to become lower and lower. When it wants to cross a river, it goes up one of the highest trees on the bank, so they assure us, and from there starts its flight, which little by little loses height, and sometimes, on the rivers that are too wide, they do not manage to reach the other bank. It was observed that the Tukano Indians, seeing a tucano /toucan/ fly over the river Uaupés at one of the widest points, uttered cries, as though of apprehension, in fear that the bird might not succeed in reaching the opposite bank.

They are only traces that at most might lead one to infer an earlier social form of totemic clan, if they are not elements acquired by borrowing (the instinct of imitation of the Indians is so remarkable) from other groups. [824] One does not note, however, any attention (respect, fear, pleasure) toward the animal or plant whose name they bear; names, besides, without economic importance (except the Baniva or another one), contrary to what happens as a rule in connection with the totemic names.

It has not been noted that they avoid killing it or, on the contrary, try to eat it in some special circumstances. If they find it dead, /476/ no sign of surprise. It is certain that at times they kill it in order to use its feathers in the dance ornaments. But, at least in the present form (112),

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> 112. We so often insist on the idea that these are present customs. This is because it becomes difficult or impossible to verify how they proceeded in other times. And the Indians respond to our questions: -- "It has always been this way."

the ornaments are the same for the various tribes, be they called Tukano, Arara, Tuyuka, Pirá-tapuya, etc. It can even be asserted that their attitude is one of perfect indifference before the animal with their own name, more or less just as before any other animal.

614 619 There are no tucano /toucan/, pica-pau /woodpecker/, juritĩ /dove/, etc. clans, either. They are and they are considered nations or different tribes, each one with its own language and peculiar somatic features. It is true that one and the same tribe is subdivided into groups with names that might seem clanlike (cf. IV-2-a(2) /see a(3)/). But they indeed are not the animals that appear

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614 in the dance ornaments. Besides, such groups, or Gentes, are far
• 619 from the classic type of clan. For example, marriage is not permitted between the Gentes, but only between one and another Nation.

The ornaments with feathers of the tucano /toucan/, arara, garça /heron/, or monkey fur are bound up with the legend of Wãx-tí, which, due to the mutual relationship between the tribes, has figured in the history of each tribe. The ornaments, however, are
[438] not distinctive for family or clan. They are essentially the same for all the tribes, being an object of trade of one tribe with another. This circumstance alone already speaks against a clan interpretation.

[532] It is absolutely not noted that any tribe or group has any pictoria
[825] rial representation by incision or sculpture of any animal whatsoever, and even less of its titular.

As for the dance masks and personages, it is to be observed first
[53] that there is the one of the borboleta /butterfly/, and nevertheless there is no human group with this denomination, and nothing reveals its having existed. In the second place there are mask, dance, and song of the cutia /agouti/, and a subdivision among the Tukano, the Bwá-põrã, children of the cutia, and an Arwake tribe of the Içana, Awadzuranai or cutia-tapuya, are known under this name; and nevertheless there is no such mask among the Tukano, but there is among the Arwake.

It seems that the same personage now does the borboleta /butterfly/, now the cutia, etc. Now one, now another will do such a role; within the same maloca there are the various personages, and it is not a matter of a function inherited from father to son either. All this testifies against the hypothesis of the existence of clan subdivisions.

/477/ As for the episode of the concern for the tucano
[825] /toucan/ that was crossing the river, it could be a manifestation of simple curiosity, which among the Indians comes so many times accompanied by exclamatory noises. The elders relate nothing that might prove to be a matter of a clan totem. At least by what we know up to now.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
SQ19 Tucano SQ19

part of the Central American and Andean jaguar distribution; perhaps the Cubeo ranked clans and ancestral cult are also part of the Andean picture. However, where there is a cultural relationship it is probable that it moves in either direction. The lowlands took from the Andes; it is likely that they gave as well. Perhaps a close study of social conditions in the tropical forest could shed specific light on the spectacular historical developments in the Andes. The way in which the Cubeo maloca, the multifamily residence, tends to become a sib ceremonial center for those sib members who have broken away from it illustrates, for example, a possible process of ceremonial center formation.

Questions of culture history are inevitably to the fore when one compares the tropical forest with the Andes. But even as a separate entity the tropical forest area commands culture-historical interest. Cubeo social structure, for example, suggests some of the ways in which small social units such as extended and joint families and lineages grow into and combine to form more complex and more highly integrated social systems. Segments of one tribe attach themselves as entities to other tribes adopting a new language. Federations of segments are formed by various combinations of adoption, adhesion, and fission; these bind themselves together by ceremonial ties and not by ordinary political means of suprachieftainship. Other processes are at work elsewhere in the region. Thus it is not difficult to imagine that detailed comparative studies of tropical forest social structures could provide a rich foundation for the reconstruction of modes of social evolution, within a fixed range of social integration. As native Africa is a natural laboratory for the study of nascent states, the South American tropical forest as a major culture area is a natural laboratory for the study of variations in a small community, and lineage and clan organization.

In the foregoing discussion my intent was to provide the reader with a broad problem setting in which the Cubeo are viewed generally as a tropical forest culture. Since tropical forest anthropology is not too widely known this seemed a useful thing to do. However, the Cubeo are more specifically a part of the Northwest Amazon subculture area. The Northwest Amazon is designated as a subarea of the tropical forest in the *Handbook of South American Indians*. Not a sharply delineated area, it includes several of the major languages of lowland South America: Arawakan, Cariban, Tucanoan, Witotoan, and Macú. Of these language groups, Tucanoan (the language of the Cubeo), Witotoan, and Macú are restricted to the Northwest Amazon and were until recently listed as unclassified languages

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calabash dishes that had only just been acquired from the Karapana Indians was traded to the Desanas for a tray. The Cubeo seem to prefer the trade article to the domestic product. Finally, it should be said of intertribal trade that much of it follows the lines of intermarriages, in which objects are transferred in the course of normal affinal exchanges.

Within the tribe, objects tend to be exchanged largely in accordance with principles of kinship and blood brotherhood. However, as sibmen visit along the river they learn which objects and whose skills one may properly admire. The object is asked for, or in a sense contracted for, and a genial nonhaggling discussion settles the terms of the exchange. Apart from farinha, a special case, food rarely enters the channels of native trade. Koch-Grünberg's information that upriver people acquired manioc from the downriver *Hehéneua* does suggest trade in food. He gives no details, however (1909, II, 82). I never observed or heard of native trade in food, other than casual and small-scale exchange of secondary crops. Maize, for example, is a trade item, but then it is hardly a foodstuff on the Cuduiarí.

PROPERTY

With respect to land it is dominion rather than ownership that we deal with. A tribe has dominion over a territory, a phratry over a river or over sections of a river, and a sib over a smaller segment of river frontage. Dominion is sanctioned by traditions of origin which narrate precisely where the first ancestors came from, and their subsequent travels and settlements. On the strength of these traditions people can say, "This is our land." A group that has been displaced from a traditional territory may adapt its traditions to new conditions, giving itself a new origin myth. But as long as the traditions hold, the claim to dominion over the territory is not surrendered. Place names are part of the traditional claim to a territory. They identify ancestral sites, and, more particularly, fishing sites, old orchards, and manioc plantations.

Since there is no tribal or phratric administrative organization, concepts of tribal or of phratric dominion are matters of general sentiment rather than of concrete claims. Only a sib is truly concerned with its territorial integrity. There is little cause for a sib to fear encroachment on its territory. There have been instances of one sib taking over the territory of another, but these instances, as the Cubeo interpret them, were of hostility against the people, not of desire for their land. I found no evidence of land hunger among the Cubeo.

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gencalogies is not strong, so that they have only a general, albeit a strong, feeling that the family lines presently in a sib are related. What keeps the sib from being a lineage is then the technical fact that the Cubeo cannot link up their present descent lines with their ancient descent lines.

One is tempted, therefore, to think of the Cubeo descent group as a transitional form, hovering between sib and lineage. At first glance the distinction between sib and lineage seems to hang by the technicality of how sophisticated a people are about genealogies. Yet this sophistication is a matter of major importance. Sib continuity and growth is a relatively simple matter of transmitting a sib name and a line of descent with an origin myth to give historical sanction. Lineage continuity and growth, on the other hand, demand motivation as well as the capability for maintaining accurate or presumably accurate genealogical records. Societies organized upon aristocratic lines can do this readily. Egalitarian societies, on the other hand, can have small lineages or large clans and kindreds but they cannot readily support large or historically deep lineages. The Cubeo have a shadow aristocracy only, not enough to sustain the necessary degree of genealogical sophistication. On the other hand, if the Cubeo could not sustain the growth of lineages neither could they sustain the growth of sibs. Two social conditions seemed to stand in the way of the enlargement of sibs. One was the inherent fissility of the sib, the other was the organization of the phratry. The phratry allowed the sibs to split without endangering their survival by virtue of being too small.

The basic social organization that provides for autonomous confederation of small units conforms readily to the requirements of easy absorption of new groups. The modes of group-binding, such as exogamy, the cycle of drinking parties, and the segmented forms of ceremonial participation that allow each sib to function as a ceremonial unit, are also admirably adapted to rapid assimilation of foreign tribes without benefit of a central administration. In cases of assimilation, all the necessary joint activities to which the sibs of a phratry are bound will inevitably encourage a common language. Just as the phratric organization allows for easy binding of autonomous sibs into a convenient fraternity that provides for peace, cooperation, and sociability, it allows as readily for fission without serious disruption. From these observations it may be inferred that the history of the Northwest Amazon region has been one of constant formation and disruption of sociopolitical entities. What a tribe is at any time is a core of sib segments that may have persevered through

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614 time and then have drawn to them new sibs from peoples speak-
619 ing the same as well as other languages. The Cubeo tribe, as we have
174 already observed, seems to be an aggregate of Tucanoan-speaking, Arawakan-speaking, and "Macuan"-speaking peoples. A particular sib that belongs to one tribe today may incorporate itself into another tomorrow.

614 It is possible that sib formation in the Northwest Amazon region
174 has been an outgrowth of this process of repeated assimilation of new groups. The reasoning behind this assumption is as follows: patrilocal extended families need only assert and maintain a tradition of common origin and then live up to the requirement of maintaining a firm group identity, within a confederation, to make the transition to sib or clan. The suggestion is, however, that sib formation cannot be accounted for merely by the growth of extended patrilocal families or by the enlargement of lineages – because of the ease of fission – but rather as a response to quite another process, that of confederation in which the identity of the joining segments is retained. A confederation of descent groups heightens the probability that all will defend their autonomy by asserting their identity of common descent.

THE SIB AND PHRATRIC ORGANIZATION

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615 The sibs are listed in approximate order of rank. This rank order
554 should be considered as provisional, since it represents mainly the *Bahúkiwa* view of sib rank.
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PHRATRY I

Órobawa The leading sib: they still live at Uaracapurí on the Vaupés, the site of a rapids from which they first emerged. Their first male ancestor was called *Órobakũ*. According to one version of the origin tale, he was the head of the anaconda from which all Cubeo are descended. He then named all the sibs of the phratry that followed after him. Koch-Grünberg identified them as *Olaba-Hehénewa* and hence as a branch of the *Hehénewa*. Nimuendajú listed them as *Órobawa*. According to my information, they are most closely linked with the *Hwdni-Hehénewa* and with the *Aúnwawa*, the easternmost or most downstream community of the Cubeo.

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Aúnbawakũ The second sib, occupying the next site upstream on the Vaupés at Urania. Their first ancestor was *Aúnkũ*. Some informants said that *Aúnkũ* was the last to emerge but was granted second place by *Órobakũ*. In any case, their position on the Vaupés gives them second rank. They are regarded as very closely linked with the *Hehénewa*. In 1940 they were reduced to four households. Some had taken up residence

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walks by. If she runs from him toward her manioc garden his quest is over. Since it is the girl who must indicate acceptance by inviting coitus, the young man comes prepared with love charms. One of these is an extract of *iiwe*, the plant associated with the ancestral cult, a symbol of power and virility, which he sprinkles upon her when she is unaware. This makes her desire him very passionately. After marriage a man uses what is apparently an antiaphrodisiac charm to keep his wife faithful.

Actually a wedding party is engaged in three levels of negotiation simultaneously, all three of which must be successful. The first is the courtship, the second is the discussions going on between the parents and the elders of the party over the terms of the marriage, and the third is the discussion between the groom and his *tcimá*, his male cross-cousin, the bride's brother. The *tcimá* is involved because a daughter will not be let go unless a return bride can be secured for him. It is up to the groom to promise the *tcimá* his own sister in return. Since no marriage is honorable that does not establish a proper relationship with an affinal sib, a man would be a scoundrel if he eloped with a girl without paying heed to these formal matters. Normally there are no difficulties, since the courtship would not get very far if the *tcimá* or the parents were seriously dissatisfied with the terms of marriage.

It is typical of the Cubeo that the atmosphere in which these three levels of negotiation are conducted is a genial one. Their mode of hospitality assures this by drawing guests fully into the life of the maloca and of the community – the groom joining the age group of his *tcimá*, the elders picking up corresponding social roles in their age group. The wife of a visiting elder is assigned a section of manioc garden. The point is that a guest who is going to spend more than a few days is as near as possible "at home." It is when the people feel at ease in their familiar roles in a new setting that they get down to business. When the marriage party has left with its bride it has also succeeded in strengthening the ties of friendship with an affinal sib and has overcome in practice the general theory that an affinal is a hostile sib of the tribe.

This mood of geniality is not achieved, nor is it sought for, in all circumstances. When the marriage is intertribal the courtship is conducted in an atmosphere of strain that is almost impossible to overcome. The bride's sib cannot be easily consoled at the loss of a daughter. When the marriage does occur they feel that they have been tricked in some way. They resent the girl's willingness to go off; they are mistrustful of the bride price and the promised exchange

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marriage. These suspicions are not overcome even though they may already have affinal kin in the other tribe.

Among the *Bahúkiwa*, I was witness to some of the events of the full cycle of an exchange marriage involving the neighboring Tucanoan-speaking *Tatúyo*. The opening wedge for this marriage was made by a *Bahúkiwa* woman who had married a *Tatúyo*. One day she reappeared among the *Bahúkiwa* with her husband and young children and settled down for a long wait. She was given a manioc garden and her husband devoted himself to making household implements for the wife of the headman. The headman had two marriageable daughters and two marriageable sons, to each of whom had been assigned, in the traditional manner, a sister whom he would exchange for a bride. One of the daughters, the elder, was very attractive, vivacious, flirtatious, and ardently desired by many young men. She had been married and divorced several times and was accused of having aborted, or killed at birth, several of her offspring. Because she was headstrong and not very industrious, sober-minded folk regarded her as a poor choice for a bride. Nevertheless, she was assigned to the older son, a very capable young man who showed every promise of becoming a headman. By seniority his was to be the prior marriage. Among the Cubeo the problem is to have the sons marry in proper age sequence and not the daughters. The *Bahúkiwa* visitor stated her opinion that such a girl needed a *Tatúyo* as a husband. "A *Tatúyo* could tame her," she said. The *Tatúyo* indeed had a reputation for ferocity because at the time they were still at war with the whites. By contrast with the Cubeo, those I saw were sullen and certainly appeared to be far more aggressive. She added that the *Tatúyo* also had many fine young girls, girls who had not been spoiled by contact with whites. The headman had no sooner grasped the possibilities of such a marriage for his undisciplined older daughter than a party of *Tatúyo* appeared to visit their fellow *Tatúyo*, who, they remarked jokingly, had lived away for so long that they now thought of him as a *Bahúkiwa*. It was a "large" party of eight men of warrior age. They came in two canoes. They were quartered among the various households and they stayed for several weeks, showing great skill in hunting, fishing, and in making implements. No one spoke marriage; but the signs were soon evident in the flirtatiousness of the daughters of the headman and two of the *Tatúyo* youths. When the *Tatúyo* announced that they were now ready to go home, a drinking party was quickly arranged as a farewell. When the *Tatúyo* party had left, it was discovered that the younger daughter was missing and that the older sister, whose "elopement" was taken

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for granted, had remained home. When this was discovered the headman and all the able-bodied men he could muster rushed for their canoes and paddled furiously downriver to intercept the "abductors." The girl's mother sputtered with indignation at the *Tatúyo* who had "tricked them" and at her daughter who had betrayed them. This, it emerged, was a genuine elopement. The older sister, willful as ever, had no intention of being "tamed" by anyone, least of all by backwater Indians. Her younger sister was eager, however, and it was no trouble to get the *Tatúyo* to accept her. In due time the *Tatúyo* were intercepted. Assuredly they allowed themselves to be intercepted. Since the girl would under no circumstances agree to come home, the parties had only to settle the conditions of an exchange marriage. The *Tatúyo* designated a girl, ripe to be taken as a wife at any time, and by way of apologizing for eloping with the wrong daughter agreed to add a large canoe. Back home, the headman berated his sister for thinking more of the interests of her *Tatúyo* husband than of her *Bahúkiwa* people.

The elopement postponed the marriage of the older son, who was eager for a wife and precipitated the younger one into a marriage to which he had not yet been giving thought, so strong is the Cubeo convention of pairing a brother and sister for an exchange marriage. In a few months the younger son was sent to "demand" the bride promised. I did not accompany the marriage party to the *Tatúyo*. But when the party returned with a very attractive young bride they reported to the satisfaction of the headman that the groom, having first offered his sister a chance to return home, asked for the bride. The girl was brought out. He took her by the hand and led her to the canoe. "We did not even stay overnight," he boasted. Such brusqueness and calculated discourtesy would not occur if the exchange were with the maternal sib.

Sheer sexual attractiveness is regarded as the wrong reason for choosing a bride. The point is not only that physical sturdiness and industriousness are better traits, but that a sexually provocative woman will be a source of trouble to the sib. A responsibility of an elder accompanying a marriage party is to remind the groom-to-be to pay attention to the sterling qualities of a bride, that do include, however, such erotically desirable features as large, full breasts, a strong back, and a clear skin. They would prefer to have her sullen rather than vivacious.

Formal marriage is signalized by what must be regarded as the "rite of abduction." The groom seizes his bride and runs with her to the canoe. She cries out for help and her male kin rush out and

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what it was yesterday. Moreover, the concept of homeostasis, like that of pattern, is a theory of society. As a theory it rests upon further theoretical assumptions as to what are the significant relationships, what are the normal patterns, and what are the disharmonious and stressful interactions. In the final analysis, a theory of homeostasis deals primarily with the ways in which a society handles conflicts and stresses. From a broad perspective, one can say that Cubeo society depends rather heavily upon what might be called "mood management" for equilibrium. Its homeostasis rests a good deal less upon networks of reciprocal obligations and upon formal exchanges of goods than, let us say, in Melanesian societies. The clearest illustration of this Cubeo equilibrium principle is in the role of the headman. In Cubeo culture he is not an economic redistributor (the drinking parties cannot be regarded as an econo[illegible]change) but a regulator of community sentiment and of go[illegible]g. However, the nature of Cubeo equilibrium is best considered at each particular level of social integration.

Cubeo society may be presented diagrammatically as encompassing five orbits of relationship, arranged in order of progressively weaker bonds of unity. The innermost orbit is represented by the male siblings, the nucleus of the sib; the second orbit is the sib itself; the third orbit is the phratry; the fourth, the affinal kin; and the fifth and outermost, the tribe. The brother-sister relationships and the husband-wife relationships may be regarded as within the confines of the first and second orbits.

Each orbit has its own characteristics of equilibrium. To take them in reverse order: Tribal unity is so tenuous that fragmentation into subtribal units is of little consequence. New combinations are readily formed and whatever disturbance this may cause is very temporary. Tribal continuity rests upon tradition and common language and customs, on the one hand, and upon the phratric organization, of which it is a summation, on the other. With respect to tribe, the question of equilibrium is more pertinently not what holds the tribe together, but rather what there is to disperse it. Tradition and common customs and language are little more than bonds of inertia. Once set, they hold unless some stronger force intervenes. Against what counterforces are the relatively weak bonds of tradition to contend? The answer is that there are no such counterforces arising from within the society, since tribal unity has no tasks to accomplish that could involve stresses and strains. Paradoxically, the very absence of a tribal leadership is a source of unity. By virtue of the linkage-

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autonomy principle, strong tribal leadership would provoke fission and would then have to become remarkably strong to overcome the disruptive forces it had set in motion.

Between in-laws, the linkages are more diversified and hence are stronger than those between fellow tribesmen. The system of exchange marriages creates a particularly close set of bonds, because it draws upon the powerful nuclear bonds between brother and sister and supplements these with preferential marriage into the sib of the mother. There seems to be a potentiality for moiety formation in the Cubeo system. But this potentiality is never realized because of geographic distances and the wide ranges of marital choice, intratribal as well as extratribal. In the case of affinal sibs, the thesis of inherent antagonism is counterbalanced by the brother-sister tie. When that tie is dissolved, as by death or divorce, the antagonisms may begin to loom large, and what were formerly close ties will begin to dissolve. In this orbit of in-laws, however, equilibrium does not really demand fixed ties, since the affinal relationships are eminently interchangeable.

In the orbit of the phratry, the bonds are more impressively substantial, based as they are upon tradition, upon the fiction of blood kinship, and upon contiguity, hospitality, and ceremonial participations. These bonds of attraction are all the more impressive because there is so little to oppose them. There is no phratric leadership and there are no secular tasks to provoke possible conflict of interest. Nevertheless, latent hostilities dramatized in the mourning ceremony and made seriously real in charges of sorcery have the capability of wrecking phratric unity. To offset the powerfully disruptive force of sorcery there are few specific institutional mechanisms that the Cubeo can call upon. They rely instead upon a cooling-off period of sib separation. The excited parties separate until the original fear and anger have drained off. But why the antagonisms between the sibs in the first place? Actually, the issues that disturb friendly relations between members of different sibs are fundamentally no different than those that turn sibmates against one another. They are largely the private issues of adultery and of personal insult, aggravated by intoxication and given a grim setting by the cultural theory of sorcery. Occasionally the hostile reaction is against a sib headman who is overly assertive. This situation is duplicated within the sib as well. It is not the issues, then, but their cultural context that is significant.

When men of a sib quarrel, it is relatively easy for the headman to isolate the grievance so that only the two principals are involved. In cases of adultery the device of shifting the blame upon the woman

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571 614 593 621 and children, circulate from community to community attaching themselves temporarily to different families, since the true nuclear family is not a self-sufficient unit. The strength of individual autonomy and its psychological counterpart in the form of low tolerance for psychic discomfort is capable, apparently, of breaking the firmest social connections Cubeo culture has devised.

121 571 Whether Cubeo social equilibrium is to be evaluated as static or as dynamic will depend upon the time perspective by which it is viewed. In sociological perspective one sees autonomy counterbalancing linkage, fission offsetting fusion. Tribe has only the vaguest suggestion of a higher level of integration, while phratry is a headless configuration, largely a ritual federation subject to dissolution and to re-formation. By freezing time, the sociological perspective has the inherent bias, however, of presenting social forces as in balance. On the other hand, the sociological perspective has the merit of being empirically true to the research design. That is to say, the study of a single society at a fixed point in time and for which only vague glimmerings of history are available provides few empirical grounds for any perspective other than the sociological.

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121 174 The historical perspective on the Cubeo is then largely conjectural. It is, however, a necessary perspective both for the sake of offsetting the bias of artificial timelessness and for raising questions about Cubeo culture that would have relevance for a comparative study. In historical perspective, the Cubeo phratry, with its ranked sibs, the allocation of preferred river sites to the high-ranking, and the honorific prerogatives of high sib rank, suggests possibilities for further social and political development. Though the phratric organization is largely of a ritual nature, it is conceivable that a ritual organization provides a pattern for an eventually tighter integration through political and economic means. Some of the potential political means are already visible. Relations with the Macú point to an understanding of the dominance-subordination relationship on a political and economic plane. Recurrent alarms on the river that a headman is seeking political headship over all the sibs illustrate, to be sure, an acute Cubeo sensitivity to the danger of political control, but they also demonstrate that the possibility of overlordship is not altogether unreal. If then Cubeo culture has this potential for political evolution, what has impeded it? In the light of the foregoing analysis the answer is surely not simple. Since culture is an organization of patterns, its growth cannot be understood in terms of the action of single variables such as the influence of slash-burn cultivation, dependence on bitter manioc, or the tropical rain forest environment. Each of

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61 ity, each tribe is aligned with one of five phratries. Each phratry is a named, exogamous group of sibs that marries into the other phratries in the area. A phratry is not a political or ceremonial unit per se.

592 61 594 The basic political and ceremonial unit of the Northwest Amazon is the longhouse group, which is also the basic unit of economic redistribution. (The nuclear family is the basic economic unit *before* redistribution.) A new longhouse unit is often created by several classificatory brothers, not necessarily from the same parent longhouse. The one among them who is felt to have the best leadership qualifications becomes chief of the new longhouse group. Sometimes, also, a growing lineage group establishes a new longhouse, with its patriarch as chief. (Each nuclear family has its own area in the longhouse, and each married woman has her own hearth in this area; her husband smokes his fish and game on a rack lowered from the rafters above her hearth. All men and boys are served at one time at the center front of the longhouse by the women, who bring what they have individually prepared at their hearths, including some of their husbands' fish and game, and lay it out for all the men to share. After the men have eaten, the women and girls eat. Then each woman reclaims her own prepared food and what is left of her husband's catch.) A well-established longhouse group becomes, over a period of time, a cluster of lineages. A tribe is represented by a series of longhouses, located several hours' paddling distance apart from each other along a river and often situated at rapids for good fishing.

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• 619 197 The tribe is co-extensive with the linguistic group, which is composed of those individuals who are expected to have used the language as their principal language when they were children in their nuclear family of orientation. The language that identifies the linguistic group is, then, at once the father tongue, the longhouse language, and the tribal language of each member; it is *not* the language that identifies the mother's linguistic group.

61 582 The exogamic group is the phratry. Cultural emphasis is more on nonendogamy within the phratry than on prescribed exogamic alliances among the phratries (although suggestions of such may be found among some of the tribes). Informants, however, claim that the unit of exogamy is the tribe. The few exceptional cases of tribes whose sibs belong

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Indians, who are the patrón and his foremen, but they tend to keep themselves apart socially and linguistically from their Indian workers. The rubber-working group forms economically a patrón-peón system, or, more precisely for the Vaupés area, a patrón-padre-peón system. A benevolent role of missionaries in the Vaupés has been to minimize the depredations and excessive abuses of the rubber-working barons by requiring them to acquire their Indian workers through the missionaries as middle men.

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A clear distinction is made between tribal group and nationality; a word glossing as "landsmen" is the term used in Tukano for nationality group. There are two nationality groups among the multilingual Indians described in this paper—the Colombian Indians and the Brazilian Indians (the periphery of the multilingual area may include some Venezuelan Indians)—and even the members of the longhouses in the zone most unacculturated to "civilization" know whether they are Colombians or Brazilians. Also, Indians and non-Indians both agree that there are two clear-cut categories of people in the Vaupés: in Spanish these are called the *indígenas*, or Indians, and the *blancos*, or non-Indians (including Negros). However, the Indians feel uncertain and confused about ethnic and presumably "tribal" groups among the non-Indians. A favorite topic of conversation with me was inquiry about ethnic descent groups among such known nationality groups as Colombians, Brazilians, Venezuelans, and "Americans" (of the U.S.A.). Apparently the Indians are trying to set up a folk taxonomy for non-Indians within the Indian frame of reference. They have long been familiar with members of Dutch, German, English, Spanish, and Portuguese ethnic groups; they are confused about the nationality as against the ethnic status of some of these, especially of the latter two. Many Colombian and Brazilian nationals whom the Indians frankly regard as mestizos or creoles claim not only to be blancos but also "Spaniards" or "Portuguese"; yet they do not resemble the Dutch, German, or English blancos. (In Tukano the word for "blanco," best glossed from Spanish as "non-Indian," is derived from a form also used in the derivations of "fire, shotgun, fireplace"; the occasional blanco-sponsored request for a new form in Tukano that would gloss as "white" is consistently rejected.)

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829 Although the Indians reckon, for reference, in terms of ethnic groups, their attitude toward non-Indians is roughly the same as that of Americans in the United States toward European immigrants, who are looked upon as potentially becoming more and more American. I observed that Indians behold the visitor as potentially becoming more and more Indian-like unless he actively rejects Indian food, customs, and so forth. Most non-Indians are unaware of this attitude, and many would be contemptuous of it if they did know of it.

With respect to the Dutch, Germans, etc., an identifying criterion important to the Indian is that each of these ethnic groups is a separate language-bearing group. I was surprised that Indians do not naïvely assume that the English-speaking "American" necessarily belongs to the English ethnic group; the occasional North American traveler who insists (in Spanish) that he is "American" by *tribe* as well as by nationality is simply not believed. The North American who can be more explicit about his ethnic background is appreciated, especially if the background includes languages other than English and more than one ethnic group (thus simulating in form the exogamic language-bearing groups among the Colombian or Brazilian Indians). The Indians have also noted the widespread and, to them, notorious endogamy of the non-Indians and figure that there must be some sort of sib exogamy. The Indians ask a great deal about non-Indian marriage customs--partly because missionaries at times have suggested that the Indians' exogamy system is cumbersome and uncivilized, and that it promotes close cousin marriage, whereas the Indians feel that it is the non-Indian, with his lack of a clearly definable exogamy system, who is indiscriminate.

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As for nationality-and-language, the Indians know that Spanish is the language of non-Indians on the Colombian side of the border and that Portuguese is the corresponding language on the Brazilian side of the border. They also know that Spanish is the language of Venezuela and that English is the language of "America." Nationality has no bearing on exogamy.

The Tribal Unit

• 619 In the central Northwest Amazon the term "tribe" has been used both for individual language-bearing units and for composites of these units sharing the same culture. In general

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• 619 practice, the designation of "tribe" implies a distinct culture-bearing entity. But the use of "tribe" for social units in the central Northwest Amazon has been ambiguous because of the use sometimes of linguistic and sometimes of cultural criteria. The problem of identifying tribal units has been recognized on a more general level in South American ethnology by Steward and Faron (1959:17, 21), and the concept of "tribe" in the world-wide anthropological literature has most recently been challenged by Fried (1966), who indicates that assumptions regarding the diachronic and politico-evolutionary status of so-called tribes need re-examination.

619 192 The Tukano, Tuyuka, Barasana, and other Eastern Tukanoan-speaking Indians of the central Northwest Amazon have no simple term for "tribe" in their languages, nor for "lineage," "sib," "phratry." In discussion these units are designated by proper names (e.g., "the Tukanos") or, if the context is clear, by demonstratives suffixed with one of the various classifiers glossing as "group," "class," "persons," any one of these social units. When Spanish is used, however, *tribu* is applied by Indians to the language-bearing unit only, whereas *familia* and *grupo* are applied to various units, including the tribe. When an informant is asked to explain the meaning of "tribu" in Tukano (or in another Eastern Tukanoan language), he invariably gives the proper name of the language-bearing unit, and follows up further questioning about other social units by giving the proper names of those that he knows, especially of those in his own lineage-sib-tribe hierarchy, and he concludes with a statement such as, "They're all my relatives." If recourse is made to Spanish to explain a hierarchical arrangement, an informant will say something like "*Este grupo tiene tres grupos.*" In Tukano he would say, "This-group is three-groups: the 'Anteater' people are three-groups: the A are at X rapids, the B are at Y stretch of the Papurí River, and the C are at Z mission village." Linguistically, the name for the language is the name for the tribe in the plural possessive form, nominalized; the plural infinitive of the word for "to speak" is the form glossing as "language," and if this form also appears along with the tribal name, then the plural possessive form of the tribal name also appears but it is not nominalized.

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191 578 dated dancing body. During the course of the ceremony, the women group according to their own tribal affiliations and sing as choruses in their own father-tongues. Married women alternate between singing in their original father-language, in their husband's language, and in the longhouse language of the hosts.

191 197 • 619 If neither one's father nor mother is Tukano, one nevertheless will speak Tukano as a lingua franca. Indirect evidence suggests that Tukano existed aboriginally, or at least early in the historic period, as a lingua franca, although its epicenter may have formerly been in the Lower Vaupés. The Tukano tribe may even have been the dominant group in a confederation or nation of sorts (Markham 1910). At any rate, the Tukano are widely and strategically located and appear to have exerted a dominant influence in the whole area. The Tukano claim a mild prestige as the senior sibs of the area and regard all the other tribes as younger-brother sibs in a particular rank order (see Fulop 1955); this ranking is accepted by the other tribes. Because the Tukano tribe is so widespread, almost every longhouse has at least one Tukano woman in it. Therefore, persons who do not have a Tukano for father or mother still have someone in their longhouse from whom they can absorb the correct pronunciation of Tukano.

197 Now, the Tukano language contains at least six dialects. As a lingua franca it is not pidginized but is learned in one or another of its tribal dialect forms, whatever one the learner is exposed to. Speakers for whom Tukano is not their father- or mother-language can still be identified as to regional dialect. Tukano, incidentally, is not an easy language to learn. It has a great many phonemes and an intricate tonal system; and apart from the tonal system, it has an intricate system of stress. This suggests the hypothesis that sheer intricacy may foster an all-or-none attitude toward learning to speak a phonologically elaborate language. Maintenance of Tukano as a lingua franca has probably been reinforced by there being some 25 or more language groups that it serves.

191 The Indians do not practice speaking a language that they do not know well yet. Instead, they passively learn lists of words, forms, and phrases in it and familiarize themselves with the sound of its pronunciation. The diverse and discrete phonologies of these languages and their dialects loom very prominently in

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